Chapman, J. Wilbur
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The Christian's Relation to Amusements and the World

A Sermon by

REV. J. WILBUR CHAPMAN, D. D.

Delivered in Atlanta, Georgia

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"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things; and I will receive you."—II. Cor. 6:17.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:2.

J. WILBUR CHAPMAN

INTRODUCTION

The evangelistic services held in Atlanta under the direction of J. Wilbur Chapman and his associates, more thoroughly awakened and strengthened the churches and resulted in the salvation of more of the unsaved than any similar effort within the recollection of our people. God, through his servants, manifested His marvelous power, day by day, as the meetings progressed, until the whole city was brought into an atmosphere of prayer and, actually, lived in the Glory of His presence and felt His power and willingness to redeem.

During the series, Dr. Chapman was asked to preach a special sermon on the Christian's Relation to Amusements and the World. This he did in great power and, yet, in tenderness and gentleness of speech. There was not a harsh word in all he said nor a severe rebuke in any utterance he delivered. It was all sweet and kind and earnest and loving and true.

The sermon was intended for church members, who believe the amusements discussed are altogether innocent, and in no sense hurtful to themselves or to others. It was not preached to the unsaved.

The sermon was based on sacrifice. How much is the church member willing to sacrifice for Christ?

Concisely stated it is this: If social position requires the sacrifice of allegiance to Christ, which will you sacrifice, social position or loyalty to the Lord? If not so, it is this: If the amusement does in no way hurt you, but your indulgence is liable to destroy your friend, and, through him, scores of others, will you sacrifice your pleasure, innocently indulged, and save your friend, or will you sacrifice your friend and those whom he would destroy and enjoy your personal pleasure just for a little season?

The sermon was a powerful presentation of personal choice. May I ask the reader of this little pamphlet which sacrifice will be made in the prospect of the judgment to come?

May God's blessing be upon this effort to relieve the churches of worldliness and sin.

Atlanta, Ga. W. J. NORTHEN.

Atlanta, Ga.

My Dear Governor Northen:

I consider Dr. Chapman's sermon on "Amusements" one of the most comprehensive, convincing, courteous and appealing presentations of the Christian's relationship to questions of casuistry that I have ever heard. I am profoundly thankful that already I see in the lives of some of my own members a fruitage from this sermon. I have been told by several that they had banished card playing from their list of diversions. I agreed with Dr. Chapman throughout in all he said, and would be glad personally to continue along the line he followed had I his tact and talent.

I am very sure that the danger to such a congregation as the one God has given me the privilege of serving lies not along the way of open sin, or wilful disobedience, but the danger, and especially to the younger Christians, is to be feared from the very things which Dr. Chapman so wisely dealt with, and from my own observation I am convinced that these things arrest development and, like slow poison, deaden the spiritual sensibilities of those who otherwise would be great powers in God's service. With very cordial regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

RICHARD ORME FLINN,
Pastor North Avenue Presbyterian Church.

The power and the appeal of Dr. Chapman's address on "Amusements," I was convinced as I heard it and am convinced as I read it, stands out in three features that characterize it:

1st. It is sane in its recognition of a Christian freedom in Christ from compulsion save that which is imposed by a consecrated will.

2d. It is sweet and persuasive in temper, not dogmatic and arbitrary. It says by its tone, "Come, let us reason together."

3rd. It makes permanent the principle of sacrifice for the sake of others who may be and so often are led astray by the thoughtless influence of Christians, otherwise admirable, who defend by word and example the modern dance, the modern theater and the spirit of gambling which on the parlor card-table ventures more and more into gambling itself.

JOHN E. WHITE,
Pastor Second Baptist Church.

Atlanta, Ga.

My Dear Governor Northen:

I am glad to say that I heard with pleasure and approval the sermon of Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman on questionable amusements

and the relation of Christian people towards them. His presentation of the subject was discriminating, in excellent spirit, and put abstinence from things that may become evil, if not actually so in the nature of things, on the high ground of devotion to Christ and a Christ-like willingness to sacrifice whatever lessens our influence and power over those who do not acknowledge the Savior.

Take an illustration. The right to bear arms is given every citizen by the constitution of the United States. The state of Georgia limits that right by forbidding the carrying of concealed arms. The city of Atlanta goes farther and forbids the shooting of one's arms in one's own yard or anywhere in the city limits. All recognize the fitness of these limitations. They are for the public good. Rights are surrendered for others' sake.

So with cards or theater going. Christ puts limitations upon what may be, under certain conditions, absolutely innocent on the part of those who do not recognize His law of sacrifice. I urge Christians to abandon things which they may have an inherent right to enjoy in an innocent way because so many people pervert these things and pervert their example even when they may be guilty of no sin. We are not under the moral law. We are under the law of love, which requires that we love others as Christ loved them even unto sacrifice. Christians must be willing to give up things innocent enough to them if they may thereby increase their influence and power with the unsaved.

Dr. Chapman's position is thoroughly sane and Scriptural in my judgment. His sermon will do permanent good with all disciples of Christ. It is not meant for others. It presents no argument the non-Christian people will approve.

Yours fraternally,

W. W. LANDRUM,
Pastor First Baptist Church.

SERMON

Text: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?"—Matthew 19:27.

"This nineteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel presents to us one of the characteristics for which the Bible stands distinct from every other book. I am very well aware that those of you who know your Bibles would say that there are many of these characteristics, but the one I have in mind is this: Side by side with the mountain of truth, the heights of which pierce the clouds as we look up and try to study them, we always find nestling at the foot, the valley; and as this is true in the landscape of earth, it is also true in the study of God's Word, and I do not know that there is a chapter in the New Testament where the subject is made plainer.

"For example, over in the first part of the nineteenth chapter we find the Lord Jesus talking concerning the question of divorce, and the more he speaks the more the disciples seem to be confused, until at last they turn away from him, I imagine, almost with despair, and there, side by side with this truth, which seems so incomprehensible to them, we find one of the tenderest scenes in all the New Testament. It is said they brought young children unto Him, and it is supposed that the personal pronoun refers to the mothers of the children. I can see them as they push their way near to Him, that they might get into the immediate presence of the Master, and the Disciples trying in every way to push them back, until at last the Lord Jesus, feeling their presence with His heart, as well as seeing them with His eyes, said to the disciples: 'Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' and I can see Him as He took the little ones in His arms, and giving them His blessing, sent every mother away with joy in her heart, and a song on her lips. If you have become discouraged in Bible study, because the book seems so difficult to understand, just turn over the next page and read or study the next story, and you will find a word which for sweetness seems to have been written for your hearts alone, and to know your Bible is to have discovered the cure for worldliness.

"This text, which I have chosen, is one of the interruptions which the Lord Jesus met as we find Him in this nineteenth chapter of Matthew. It is the third interruption. I do not need to ask you the name of the man who interrupted Him. There was only one man who would put the thought into words, that

is the man whom we all love, and his name is Peter. And Peter said unto Him: 'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?' Others might have considered the question for they had made real sacrifices for Christ, but Peter was one of those who always put his thoughts into words. Out from this text this afternoon would grow a subject like this: The profit and loss in the service of God.

"Joseph Parker says if you want to be absolutely certain of the divinity of Jesus Christ, take the Gospel of Matthew up to the twentieth chapter, place before you all the words that Jesus has spoken, and then, side by side with them, the words of the disciples, and you will be impressed with these two things—how grand the words of Jesus and also with this—how little and thin and piping the voices of the disciples do seem to be. Add the one up, he said, and as the result of your sum in addition you will have humanity. Add the other up and as a result of your sum in addition you will have divinity.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

"When Peter said: 'Behold, we have forsaken all,' he not only stated a principle of religion, but of human life as well. You ask a man who has been successful in business, 'How did you reach your position of influence and power?' and almost without a single exception the successful man of to-day will say, 'By walking along the path of self-sacrifice.' There were a hundred things I wanted to do, but I could not do them; I had to be like the apostle of old and say, 'This one thing I do.' You turn to the man who is a successful teacher, a successful lawyer, or a successful physician, and say to them, 'How did you reach all this proficiency?' and they, too, will say that it was by walking along the way of complete self-sacrifice. It is a principle of human life as well as a principle of religion.

"Certainly it is true of the latter. There are things we must give up if we are members of the body of our risen Lord; things that the people of the world may do with a clear conscience, but we may have nothing to do with them; we stand in this world for God; our responsibility is unto Him, and His reputation is at stake in your life and mine. We may shrink from this as much as we please, but it is nevertheless the only true position for the Christian.

"Now, I am frank to say that these things which we must give up depend upon our calling or our position. Do not, for a single moment, imagine that I am saying to-day that there is one thing I must give up because I am a minister, and you need not give it up simply because you are just a member of the church. That is not true. There is not a place in the New Testament

where you can find a line that would seem to make such a distinction between the man who has had hands laid upon him in ordination, and the one who is simply a lay member of the church. I believe this whole question could be settled if we would just say this to-day: 'We will do the things we would like to see our ministers do; we will visit the places where we would like to meet them; we will practice the things we would like to have them practice.'

"We would have a very pure church in a very short space of time, and yet this afternoon I have an idea that some of you have taken to yourselves the privileges that you would never think of granting me or my associates. I am absolutely certain that if it had been announced in the press of this city that I was in the habit of doing things that some of you have done every day for the last week or month or year, such as attending the dance, frequenting the theater, or indulging in a game of cards, you would not have stepped your foot across the threshold of this church to hear me preach. You would have had not a particle of confidence in anything I said from this sacred desk. And I claim the right before God to do anything, or to go to any place that any other member of the church of Jesus Christ has a right to do or go. There are things we must give up. What I mean is this: Suppose a man is called to be a church member; there must be a difference between him and his unsaved friend. The Lord Jesus must have meant this when he said, 'What do ye more than others?'

"I think we ought to stop to-day and see just what we are doing more than others. Is there a difference between you and your unsaved husband, between you and your unsaved partner, between you and your unsaved companion? You may remember the story of the young woman who had gone all the rounds of the gaieties of the week and finally she said on Friday evening that she could not attend a certain place of amusement, and when they put the question to her as to why she must stay away, she said that she was a member of the church and that there was a preparatory service for communion. They looked at her in perfect amazement, and said to her, 'Are you a communicant?' Oh, my friends, there is never to be power in the church until those of us who are members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ realize that there is a difference between us and the unsaved and the unregenerated.

"Then, suppose a man is called to be a minister in the church. There are certain sacrifices that he must make that the lay members of the church need never think of making. The gains of the merchant, the fame of the explorer, and the power of the

lawyer; these things are not for him, and there is not a successful minister to-day who has not been obliged to meet the question of making a real sacrifice for Christ. But he has been delighted to make it and has found it all joy in the service of Christ. Now suppose a man should be called to be an evangelist. I know from my own experience that there are things that he must give up that the pastor of the church need never think of sacrificing. Sometimes it is ambition; sometimes a certain kind of respect of men. I know that it is the giving up of the ease and comfort that would naturally come to one in his home. Every evangelist has been obliged to meet this, and the sacrifice has been made not only by the evangelist himself but by his wife and children, and they have found it all joy in the service of Christ. But don't you see that there is a principle running through it all? And this is the principle: Whether I am a church member, a minister or an evangelist, I must give up everything standing between me and the power of God, and I do not believe we are honest before God, neither do I believe we are faithful and consistent until we reach the place where we are willing to make this complete sacrifice.

"I do not believe you have any right to sit in judgment upon my life, but I do believe that we ought all of us to go before God in sincerity and say to Him, 'Oh, my Father, I will give up anything standing between me and Thee, and in the way of the manifestation of Thy power.' If you would be willing to do that as a member of my church, I would be perfectly sure that I would never have any trouble with you, and you would never have any difficulty in settling these vexed questions.

WEIGHTS TO LAY ASIDE.

"You remember the word of the apostle where he says: 'Wherefore lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us.' Can any of you tell me what a weight is as the apostle had it in his mind? It was just a little thing added to the runner to increase his avoirdupois, so that he might be equal to his adversary in the race; just by an accumulation of these little things he was made ready to run well his race. Now, the apostle says: 'Lay aside every weight.' What is a weight? A weight for a Christian is anything about which he has any doubt; it is the thing he wants other people to settle for him; it is the thing he wants the evangelist to preach about; it is the one thing he would like to have his minister declare perfectly right; it is the thing he is always arguing about.

"As a matter of fact, I have never considered it wise as a pastor to preach against so-called popular amusements of the day for three reasons: First, because harmful as they may be in

themselves, I am persuaded that all the sins of the church are not to be summed up under the heads of theater-going, card-playing, and dancing, for there may be some in the church who congratulate themselves that they have not been guilty of these things, while, on the other hand, they are quite as grievous sinners in the eyes of God, and their influence has been just as truly crippled as if they had been frequently found in the so-called questionable places of amusement.

"Second, I always felt, as the pastor of a church, that if I should make an appeal to my people not to do the things which, to say the least, are questionable, and they should agree, because of their confidence in me, and their desire to please me to order their lives as I had suggested; if then, when the next theater party occurred and the next dance or card party should be given, they would say: 'How we wish we had not promised the minister that we would refrain from these things!' I might look upon their lives and call them very circumspect; but God looks deeper than the surface, and He observes the desire to do the things that may be harmful in their influence, and they are responsible to Him for their failure. I am very sure that there is, as a rule, a better way to treat this subject than to antagonize it publicly, and yet at the same time I must say that there are conditions sometimes in a city which call for the most pronounced and emphatic statements from the pulpit. If we could only in some way learn the secret of keeping people busy in church and lay upon them burdens of responsibility that would tax their strength and call forth their benevolence, I am persuaded that there would be less inclination to do these questionable things which make them of so little account in the church life.

"Third, in attacking special sins we are so apt to miss the faults of our hearers. One of my friends made a complete list of sins he considered to be wrong in the lives of Christians and read the list publicly. At the close of his sermon a woman said to him, 'Doctor, I am so thankful for that list of sins; I do not find in it a thing I have been fearful about for years.' And when she told him what it was, to his horror he found it worse than anything he had mentioned.

"Then there is another reason. I have long ago feared that just in the proportion that we grow as Christians we turn away from the things that in our earlier Christian experience may have been very attractive to us.

"If you will turn to Ephesians, the fourth chapter and fourteenth verse, you will find that it says, 'Henceforth be no more children.' That is, literally, little babies. And then over in John we find, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God,' and that Greek

word is little children. We have gotten away from babyhood and we are coming up to be little children. Then if you turn to Romans viii, 14, you find, 'For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' And that word is full-grown sons. It is not little babyhood; it is not little childhood; it is full-grown manhood, led by the spirit; led captive by the spirit, never deciding a thing for yourself, but letting him decide it; never taking a step alone, but letting Him lead you. Oh, I know that it is the solution of the whole problem. 'For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'

"Dr. Cuyler told me once that he was over in Mr. Spurgeon's home before the great preacher was taken seriously ill, and that he noticed one whole side of the room covered with children's pictures. 'Why, Mr. Spurgeon, whose are these?' And the great preacher said, 'These are my children.' 'What?' said Dr. Cuyler, 'I did not know that you had so many children.' 'Then,' said Mr. Spurgeon, 'you see, many of them are pictures of the same children at different ages. There is a child at six months, and there he is at a year, and there he is at two years, and there he is at ten,' said Mr. Spurgeon, with his face just beaming; and he said, 'Dr. Cuyler, don't you see how he has grown? Oh, I like to come into this room and feast my eyes on the children's faces and see how they do grow.'

"Let us imagine for a moment that God has taken your spiritual photograph on two different occasions. The first picture was taken at the time of your conversion, and of necessity it must be a likeness of one who was a babe in Christ. The second picture has been taken within the past year, and stretching out between the first photograph and the second is fifteen or twenty years of time. Now, I want to ask you frankly if you think that, putting these two pictures side by side, our Heavenly Father could detect a great degree of spiritual progress. Let us remember that in all that time we have had the Bible as the Word of God, Jesus Christ as the son of God to be our ideal and Savior, and the spirit of God to be our sanctifier and teacher of spiritual things, and yet, in spite of them all, we have failed to grow. It is just here that we have also met with failure in our Christian experience.

"In proportion as we come up to the measure of the statue of the fullness of Christ, we have less and less inclination to do those things about which there can be so serious a question, and surely it must be true that in proportion as we become like Jesus Christ we will lose our taste for worldly things. People say to me very frequently, 'Can I not be a Christian and dance?' or 'Can I not be a Christian and play cards?' or again, 'Isn't it possible

for me to be a Christian and yet go to the theater?' I will answer your questions by putting one to you: What in the world is your idea of a Christian life? Is it just to step across the line and be saved from hell and then reach out into the world and pluck the flowers that grow on the other side of the line? If that is your idea, then all that I have to say is this: You have up to this time failed to appreciate the height and the depth and the breadth of His marvelous love and life, and if you are simply living in the questions you put to me then I have no hesitation in saying that you are living in the place where you have been shorn, not only of peace, but of power, and you are living in a way to have but little influence over those with whom you come in contact.

"There is a better way to live than this and I submit it to you.

STORY OF THE SIRENS.

"You have doubtless heard of the Island of the Sirens where the sirens sang so sweetly that all who passed in ships were charmed by their music—lost control of themselves and the ship and the vessels were dashed to pieces on the rocks.

"One vessel came near and the officer put wax in the sailors' ears, then had them bind him to the masts, and although he struggled to be free no one would release him as the sirens sang.

"That is one way to overcome the evil influence of the fascination of the so-called popular amusements of the day.

"Just make hard and fast rules, and if the people break them turn them out of the church, which would be an unchristly action. Who has given us authority to do this?

"I am sure this is not the best solution for the problem. Another vessel came near—the sirens sang their sweetest music and the sailors never turned their heads to listen—they really did not know they were near the island and all because they had Orpheus on board and Orpheus sang a sweeter song than the sirens ever knew.

"You may tell me all you will about the pleasures of questionable amusements. I ask you in reply—Have you ever heard Orpheus sing? Have you ever really felt the joy of being Christ's own follower? If not, then yield to him to-day.

THE THEATER.

"I have but very little time this afternoon to speak to you concerning the baneful influence of the theater. The burden of my message is to be along another line. I am not so ignorant as to say that there are not plays to-day which seem on their face to be of a high moral tone, and I have been told by those who have witnessed them that their influence was all for good, but

I do know that some of the greatest actors of the present time are constantly saying that the influence of the theater is bad, and I am also persuaded that much of the danger in theater-going lies in this, that while your ideal might be an exceedingly high one and you would scorn the play that was low and vulgar, the person over whom you have an influence has no such conception of things that are uplifting in themselves, but naturally yields to the influence of a baser play, and such can be only harmful first, last and all the time.

"I am perfectly willing to stand by the teaching of the Scripture, which is this: That I have an influence in the world. I am my brother's keeper, whether I am willing to acknowledge it or not; one day I shall be called to account for the way I have helped or offended my weaker brother, and 'if meat makes my brother to offend,' then I must eat no meat.

DANCING.

"I have been told by those who say they know, that this is a harmless pastime, and that it is a pleasant way for young people, and for older people, too, to pass an evening together. I have neither the time nor the inclination to discuss this question at length. I have only this to say, that for every good thing you can say about the dance a hundred harmful things may be said, and my work has so constantly been with the public in the past ten years, I have been thrown so constantly in contact with all classes and conditions of people, that I know you will permit me to say this afternoon that I have heard from the lips of those who represent all grades of society, from the highest to the very lowest, that the dance had been the cause of their downfall. If that is true, and I believe it to be, then you will clearly understand that I can only say if dancing is simply questionable it is dangerous; if it is sinful we ought not to allow ourselves to yield to it in the least.

CARD PLAYING.

"I feel that I ought to say, mentioning these three so-called popular amusements, and I will say again, as I have said before time and again, that I do not consider that these are the only sins of the church, but they are prominently before us in these days and present problems that have almost crushed the life of many a minister. I do know that whatever you may say in favor of the friendly game of cards, however true it may be that you have found in your home that it is a pleasant diversion, I do know from my contact with men that it is one of the most harmful practices to-day known to young men, and has been the cause of the downfall of a countless number of our boys and girls. I am

persuaded that you can not have the influence which you should have if it is your custom to practice this form of amusement.

"I was speaking in a meeting in a well known Ohio city, when a mother came up to me and asked me to pray for her boy. I agreed to do this, but she came the second day and made the second request, and then her minister informed me that he thought it would be well if I should know the woman's story, and the next day I heard it from her lips. A year before her boy, seventeen years of age, came to her and said he had been attending some meetings in one of the city churches; that he had about made up his mind to confess Jesus Christ and wished her to go with him that night to the services. She told him that she would do so but that she had a previous engagement. 'To my shame,' she said, 'the engagement was at a euchre party, and I kept the engagement. My boy did not go to the church, and so far as I know he has never been in a church since. I have plead with him in these days without avail. Last night I wrote him a letter in which I told him of an event in his baby days, when his father told him he should sleep alone and he cried himself to sleep. When the morning light was breaking in the room I saw him with his little tear-stained face up against the bars of his crib and his little hands reaching out to me, and I said to him, 'My little boy, the picture is now changed; it is your mother's white face looking out to you and her hands reaching forth to you,' and she said: 'Although I plead with him in the letter to come, he would not.' Years later I inquired concerning him and he had still not turned, but to the contrary he had given himself up to a life of dissipation and sin.

"In the services of one of my friends a man stood to give this story: He was a traveling man, and before he left home to go on the road he said he had fallen into many bad habits, which gave his mother great concern. He was an inveterate card player, and in every town where he stopped he found himself playing, sometimes half the night, frequently the night through. He said he carried with him an outfit of a pack of cards, which 'I had just purchased as I started on the road. Just as I was leaving home my mother kissed me and laid her face against my cheek and in a few words pleaded with me to be a good boy and not forget my Christian home. I felt warm tears flow down my cheeks. The first night out found me at Winchester, Ky. Meeting several traveling men during the day, we agreed to put up at the same hotel and after supper spend the evening with cards. When the time came, as we were seated around the table, one of the men said: "Who has got a pack of cards?" Quickly I responded, "I have." Throwing my hand into my coat pocket, I

pulled out a little package wrapped exactly as I had put it into my pocket the day before. Unwrapping it in the presence of the others, all eyes fixed upon me, imagine my astonishment and mortification in finding instead of cards a copy of the New Testament, which my mother, some time in the small hours of the night, had dexterously substituted for my cards. I blushed and flushed and confessed to my friends. We were all deeply affected, and I stand here to say that my mother broke me not only of playing cards, but was the means of bringing me to Christ, and whenever now I am tempted to do wrong I can feel the tears of my mother trickling down my face.' Here are two mothers with their influence. I leave you to make your choice as to which sort of a life you will live.

"I was riding through the city of Chicago some little time ago, when I found myself sitting in a street car with a gentleman, a friend of mine, who had been a most conspicuous success in his ministry, and he said: 'You know I am not in the regular ministry now,' and when I asked him what he was doing, he said: 'I am conducting an anti-gambling crusade.' I said: 'Do you mean in the slums with gamblers?' 'Oh, no,' he said. 'My work is with the young men of the better families throughout the country,' and I asked him if there were many of them who had given themselves up to gambling, and he gave me figures which are really startling. I was perfectly amazed at what he said, and then he told me that nine out of every ten of all the men who are professional gamblers to-day—I mean the men that had come from the so-called better families of the country—began their gambling career by playing an innocent game of cards at home. When I questioned his statement, he proved it to me beyond all question. I went to my hotel that night, and sitting alone in my room I found myself saying this: It is not at all a question as to whether I could play cards without injury to myself. I never tried that. I am sure I never shall. But it is a question as to how far my influence shall be used for the right or the wrong. I have two boys, and if these boys should ever fall at this point, which God forbid, I want it to be true that they could never say that their father did that which started them in their downward course; and I would sooner take a live coal in my hands and let it burn through the flesh than to even touch a card. And I call upon every man here to take the same stand for his boys, and I earnestly entreat every mother to take the same stand, not only for her own children, but for other mothers' children. My work has largely been among the men of the country. I have heard their stories as hot tears have rolled down their cheeks. I have done my very best to lead them to Jesus Christ. Almost a count-

less number of them have told me that their sinful course began with the game of cards. You can understand, therefore, how I say to-day that none who calls himself or herself a Christian should yield to this amusement which may be called, at the least, questionable, but which by very many of us is considered sinful.

"In a men's meeting, recently conducted by one of the most successful pastors in Ohio, a converted gambler and ex-saloon-keeper made the following statement, which created a profound impression:

"He said: 'I have been in the saloon business, with a gambling-room attached, for the last four years, and claim to know something about what I am now going to tell you. I do not believe that the gambling den is near so dangerous, nor does it do anything like the same amount of harm as the social card party in the home. I give this as my reason: In the gambling room the windows are closed tight, the curtains are pulled down; everything is conducted secretly for fear of detection, and none but gamblers, as a rule, enter there, while in the parlor all have access to the game, children are permitted to watch it, young people are invited to partake in it. It is made attractive and alluring by giving prizes, serving refreshments and adding high social enjoyments. For my part, I never could see the difference between playing for a piece of silver molded in the shape of money and silver molded in the shape of a cup or a thimble. The principle is the same, and whenever property changes hands over the luck of the cards, no matter how small is the value of the prize, I believe it is gambling. Perhaps you have never thought of it, but where do all the gamblers come from? They are not taught in the gambling dens. A "greener," unless he is a fool, never enters a gambling hell, because he knows that he will be fleeced out of everything he possesses in less than fifteen minutes. He has learned somewhere else before he sets foot inside of such a place. When he has played in the parlor, in the social game of the home, and has become proficient enough to win prizes among his friends, the next step with him is to seek out the gambling-room, for he has learned and now counts upon his efficiency to hold his own. The saloon men and gamblers chuckle and smile when they read in the papers of the parlor games given by the ladies, for they know that after awhile those same men will become the patrons of their business. I say, then, the parlor game is the college where gamblers are made and educated. In the name of God, men, stop this business in your homes. Burn up your decks and wash your hands. The other day I overheard two ladies talking on the street. One said, "I am going to have a card party, and am going to the store to buy a pack of cards. Which are the best kind to get?" The other replied, "Get the Angel card. It has an angel on the back." Think,' said he, 'of dragging the pure angels of heaven into this infernal business!'

"After he had taken his seat another converted ex-gambler arose and said: 'I indorse every word which the brother before me has just uttered. I was a gambler. I learned to play cards, not in the saloon, not in my own home, but in the houses of my young friends, who invited me to play with them and taught me how.' A number of men went home from that afternoon meeting and set up a new rule in their families, that never should another

game be played in their homes, that their parlors should not become kindergartens for training young gamblers.

GAIN OF RIGHT LIVING.

"I have spoken about the things we must give up. Now, what is the gain? Some of you say: 'What did Peter give up?' And you try to figure it up, and all you can find that he ever did give up was an old boat that was not seaworthy, an old net that needed mending, and an old father that was ready to die, and you say to-day: 'I would be willing to give up things like that.' But you must remember that that was all he had. The only boat he had was old, the only net he had was almost useless, and the only father he had was ready to die, and he gave up everything. And, all is all, whether you live in a hut or in a palace! God always blesses those who give up everything for Him. Peter gained culture. Here was a man, a poor fisherman, ignorant and unlearned. And here is a man writing the Epistles in the purest Greek that is to be found in the New Testament. Where did he get that? At the feet of Jesus, in complete surrender. The third thing he gained was fellowship with Jesus, with Him in the home of Jairus; with Him in the garden of Gethsemane; with Him on the mount of Transfiguration! Oh, thou man of nets and boats, what would I not give up if I could have a fellowship like thine! I believe that I may have the same, if I make a sacrifice as complete.

PETER'S MONUMENT.

"Have you ever been in the Eternal City, and have you visited the building which Gibbon says is the grandest pile, used for religious purposes, in all the world?

"Three hundred and thirty-seven years coming on to completion the work of fifteen architects, Raphael and Angelo among the number.

"Seven hundred and fifty-six columns hold aloft the marvelous dome.

"One hundred and twenty-one lamps swing lighted before the different altars.

"One of my friends stood beneath the dome one day, when he heard music, and his guide said: 'Look! the Pope is coming in.'

"They carried him into the great structure, and suddenly he alighted, walked to a little crypt and bowed in prayer.

"They say he was kneeling at the spot where is to be found the ashes of St. Peter himself.

"You may deny this if you please; tell me, if you will, that it is but a Romish tradition.

"I can only say—this great building where you stand is St. Peters at Rome, and this is his monument.

"Oh, thou man of nets and boats, what would I not give up for honor like this.

"I verily believe we may all be as truly honored of Christ if our sacrifice is as complete as that of this one true fisherman. He gave up everything and he gained everything.

"When I remember all that Christ has done for me I should be ashamed to be unwilling to give up just a few trifling pleasures, falsely so called, that I might be a better representative of my Lord."

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